BT 736.2 .S68 1919

Speer, Robert Elliott, 1867-

The war and the religious
outlook

THE RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK

The War and the Religious Outlook

ROBERT E. SPEER

Library

PEDAGOGICAL LIBRARY
OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
YALE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

S
Cop 1

THE RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK

The War and the Religious Outlook

ROBERT E. SPEER

LIBRARY OF THE
Newbrunswick Theological Seminary
BT 736.2
.S68 1919
Pam

COMMITTEE ON THE WAR
AND THE RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK

Issued by
THE PILGRIM PRESS
14 Beacon St. Boston
19 W. Jackson St. Chicago

PEDAGOGICAL LIBRARY
OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
YALE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

FOREWORD

This booklet is the first in a series that will appear from time to time during the next few months under the general heading, The Religious Outlook. These publications are being brought out under the direction of the Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook in the hope that they may help to focus attention on some of the larger issues facing the Church after the war.

The Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook was constituted, while the war was still in progress, by the joint action of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the General War-Time Commission of the Churches "to consider the state of religion as affected by the war, with special reference to the duty and opportunity of the churches, and to prepare its findings for submission to the churches." Full reports of the Committee will be submitted later in the year. In the meantime the present series of booklets, issued under the auspices of the Committee, is offered as a preliminary endeavor to emphasize certain phases of the task of the Church that particularly challenge its attention at the present hour.

Communications designed for the Committee may be addressed to the Secretary, Rev. Samuel McCrea Cavert, 105 East 22nd Street, New York City.

COMMITTEE ON THE WAR AND THE RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK

Mrs. Fred S. Bennett
Prof. William Adams Brown
Miss Mabel Cratty
Mr. George W. Coleman
Pres. W. H. P. Faunce
Professor Harry Emerson Fosdick
Rev. Charles W. Gilkey
Mr. Frederick Harris
Prof. W. E. Hocking
Rev. Samuel G. Inman
Prof. Charles M. Jacobs
Pres. Henry Churchill King
Bishop Walter R. Lambuth
Bishop Francis J. McConnell
Rev. Charles S. Macfarland
Pres. William Douglas Mackenzie
Dean Shailer Mathews
Dr. John R. Mott
Pres. E. Y. Mullins
Rev. Frank Mason North
Dr. E. C. Richardson
Very Rev. Howard C. Robbins
Dr. Robert E. Speer
Rev. Anson Phelps Stokes
Rev. James I. Vance
Prof. Henry B. Washburn
Prof. Henry B. Wright

Copyright, 1919, by Robert E. Speer.

THE WAR AND THE RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK

There need be no fear that the war will have ended or impaired religion. The religious instinct is indestructible. Individuals may perhaps succeed in ridding themselves of it, but it returns in their posterity. In humanity, of every race and every age, it persists as a force of changing form but undiminishing power.

But whether the war will have affected the Christian religion is a different matter, and it is a matter of the gravest consequence to the Church. What effect has the war had upon the views of Christianity which have been traditional in the Church and upon the sentiments and moral judgments which we regard as distinctively Christian in their origin or their character? Has the war left the world more or less responsive to the message of the Church? Has it led the Church to discover any need of modifying its message? Has it confirmed or invalidated any of the essential Christian convictions? Has it made men more or less conscious of the needs which Christianity professes to meet? Has it made them more or less convinced of the ability of Christianity to meet those needs? Has it given us a darker or a brighter religious outlook?

Our view of the situation will depend in part on what we believe to be the facts as to the influence of the war on religious faith and life, and in part upon our interpretation of those facts. There may be and there is a wide divergence of view as to what the facts are. But even when they are determined and agreement regarding them is reached, the ques-

tion remains as to what the facts have to teach us. Facts by themselves, even when correctly stated, do not necessarily give us the truth. They become the truth only when rightly related and interpreted. The fact was that Jesus died upon a cross. But the truth was that His death was but the beginning of His career. Indeed the discovery of facts can often not be divorced from their interpretation. Sometimes it is only the significance which we attach to facts that makes them visible to us at all. In this interpretation we may, of course, be found to be mistaken. Nevertheless, as clearly and impartially as we can, we are bound to try to face the facts of the effects of the war upon what we believe to be Christianity and upon the Christian Church.

We have to recognize at the outset that the effects have not all been of one kind. Some have been favorable and some unfavorable. There have been results that make the task of the Church more difficult, and other results that are reassuring as to its future. There are influences that darken the religious outlook and other influences that make it bright. And perhaps it does not seem easy at first to determine on which side of the ledger the balance falls.

On the one hand the war has left behind it hurtful tendencies which make the task of the Christian Church more difficult. At least three such influences have become evident: first, certain unfavorable effects upon the character of men who served in the army and navy; secondly, a relaxation of some of the moral ideals of the rank and file of

people at home; and, thirdly, a more widespread criticism of the Church.

In the first place there is the possibility of unfavorable moral reactions from the war on the part of the five millions of young men who were enlisted in the army and navy, about half of whom got across the sea and on whom the war made the keenest impressions. What the final effects of the war experience upon these men will be no one can yet venture to say. Only time will show. Innumerable facts and interpretations of facts, which may or may not be true, are before us, but it is difficult to generalize from them with any confidence. Here is a personal letter, for example, from a young officer of the American army in France, but who can say to what extent its vision and its confusions, its religious interest and its ethical interrogations, are representative?

"Over here we have asked ourselves many questions, and the decisions have been made individually often under adverse circumstances, and frequently without much regard for the future. We have asked ourselves these questions:

1. Have we been taught a false standard of sex morality? We see a vigorous nation whose standards are totally different from our own. The people are respected, intelligent, and splendid in every way. Which way is the better? The decisions in thousands of cases are obvious.

2. Have we been taught the wrong ideas about the liquor question? Everyone knows that even the children over here take wine, etc. We have asked this question over and over, and decided in one of two ways.

3. What real harm is there in gambling? The churches can answer us that question and they have a lot of material to work on.

4. Which has failed, the Church or Christianity?

The need of a fixed understanding about the greatest thing in life is paramount. At home I was a Church member, but over here along the banks of the Meuse Canal, I found Jesus, and I saw a new, higher, holier vision. . . . I know what is going on in the minds of our men, and to the institutions of honor and truth in the States the task of reconstructing our thoughts, tendencies, and habits is brought."

Again one asks, how representative is such a letter? At least this much can be said, that the moral danger to which men in the army and navy have been exposed must have left deep scars on many lives. There will be much to be regretted and mourned. No doubt many habits of respect and reverence will have been broken down. There will be a narrowing of mind by the neglect and atrophy of many of the finer interests of life for which war has no use. It can hardly help being true that for many there will be a weakening of their sense of the sacredness of many human values. There will also be a loss of personal initiative and feeling of individual responsibility, due to the mechanical monotony of much of the military routine. There will be a dulling of some of the finer sensibilities, due to the prevalence of profanity and gambling. For many there has been a lowering of ideals of personal purity, due in part to the different standards prevailing in France and in part

to the weakening of the sense of moral shame in connection with the army method of dealing with disease. These are but a few out of the score of debilitations and deflections to which character is exposed in the work of war.

But those who have actually been in the army and navy are not the only ones whom the experience of war has effected. Upon the rank and file of men and women at home there have been new influences at work, perhaps less powerfully but certainly no less clearly, and some of these influences have been such as to effect a relaxation of certain moral ideas and so to make the task of the Church more difficult. Such an intense emotional experience as war distorts human feeling. It fires the passions of revenge and hate, which are constantly aroused and often officially fostered in war in spite of all that is done to repress them. And hating is always easily transferred from the deeds and principles which ought to be hated to persons, who can not be hated without moral injury to the hater. War also is an experience of overstrain, and the reactions both from its loyalties and from its antagonisms leave men too often relaxed in the normal fidelities and tepid in the normal resistances of life. Further it is a time of corporate action when individual rights and prerogatives necessarily have to give way to the interest of the national life. In consequence, many values of personal liberty and of self-determined moral action are impoverished. Men yield to social pressure and follow the throng, using phrases which do not sincerely express their own moral and intellectual

temper. And there has been an amount of coercion of opinion which, even though it was in a good cause and for good ends, has been full of moral danger. Still further, the economic waste involved in war on such a colossal scale is not without its moral losses also. The moral good of the war, in this economic view of it, was the principle of the subordination of all means to great ends, the lesson that it is worth while to make any sacrifice and to pay any price, to the last of life and possessions, for righteousness and freedom; but the unavoidable elements of folly and uselessness in the application of this principle in such a huge war have been morally weakening. They have offset the lessons of thrift and frugality that were essential to the financing of the war. But perhaps the most serious loss of all lies in a general wearing down of moral qualities and the deflection of moral estimates. War is an immense concrete activity. It diminishes the interest of many men in general principles and theories. The idealism which has been so prevalent in America has lessened this peril, but the conversations of civil and military life, the character of books published and of articles in magazines, show how engrossed most men's thoughts have been in specific actions and how indifferent and confused they have been as to general principles whether of politics or of economics or of religion. Ideas have been subjected to immediately utilitarian ends. "Will this help to win the war?" If not, the temper of the time bade it step aside until the war was won. And the temper of the time made the usual mistakes in

the matter and would have sealed up, if it had been allowed, some of the moral and spiritual fountains of strength and sacrifice.

Such entries as these on the moral balance sheet might be indefinitely multiplied. But it is more important to note, in the third place, some of the unfavorable issues more distinctly related to the Church. At the outset of the war the Church was accused, with every other agency of human life, of guilt and impotence for not having prevented the war. This accusation soon largely passed. It was seen that true ideals are not self-fulfilling and that the responsibility for failure does not rest upon the ideals or the institutions which embody them, but upon the human agents through whom alone they must be achieved. It was obvious that whatever failures there had been on the part of Christian men had been due not to the fact that they were Christian, but to the fact that they were men not yet adequately Christianized. Many other charges against religion and its instrumentalities, as they are known among us, have come and gone during the war and since its ending. Some have come and remain—the idea that the Church is the buttress of privilege and of social and economic conservatism, that it is not democratic, that its spirit is negative and selfish, full of prohibitions rather than of abundant life and joy, that its organizations and especially its divisions are outworn and unreal. These ideas, it is true, are not new. The war did not create them, but it has provided occasions for their wider and clearer utterance. Moreover, it is

true also that the turmoil and upheaval of war disrupt many conventional associations. Men who found themselves passively in accord in sluggish times awoke to wide divergence, and the Church was criticized on one side for the things which on some other side were deemed its special commendation. To one man it seemed to be a shelter and defense of radicalism and to another of fixed Bourbonism; to one the conservator of ideas and experiences apart from the actual warring life of the day, while to another it appeared to have lost its distinctive character altogether and to have been submerged in the world as one of its agencies of conflict. Thus the complexity of the nature and mission of the Church has been clearly illustrated in the criticism during the war and after, and the difficulty of its work is seen in the present unrest and uncertainty of hundreds of the clergy, both those who went into war work and those who stood by their posts at home.

But let us turn to the hopeful aspects of the religious outlook and consider the effects of the war that are reassuring to the Christian Church. There are at least three favorable results that are deeply significant: first, the effect of the war in stimulating the idealism of men; secondly, the confirming of many of our fundamental Christian convictions; thirdly, a new incentive to greater Christian cooperation.

In the first place, in spite of all the harmful effects of the war upon men's lives, the net result of the experience of the young manhood and

womanhood of the nation during the years of war will probably be found to have been good. It has been a great educational discipline. It has stimulated worthy ambitions. It has held before men's eyes the ideals of righteousness and duty as the supreme ends of life and work, for all those to see by whom such ideals are discernible. It has magnified in men's minds the significance of moral and spiritual values. It has taught men anew the glory of devotion to a great cause and has revealed the beauty of sacrifice. It has shown that there are great ends to be achieved worth more than life itself. It has evoked a spirit of unselfish service on such a scale as the nation had never witnessed before, and has brought a clearer realization that the great objective in life is not to acquire private gain but to minister to the growing good of the world. It has called forth a spirit of heroism and endeavor, which it is now the opportunity of the Church to use and to turn into the channels of its own great tasks. Further, the forces of religion were given during the war such an opportunity to work on and for the young manhood of the nation as they had never had. If this opportunity was not used to the full it was nevertheless better used than any other single opportunity of the war. And results are evident now in the unhindered and sympathetic accessibility of our nation to the message of the Christian Church, if spoken in the spirit and after the fashion of that speech in which men first heard it long ago and have heard it again in each human age when the living Word was needed afresh by men.

In the second place, the fundamental convictions and ideals of Christianity have been clarified and confirmed. For a time many feared the effect would be otherwise. They did not see how Christian principles could escape the destructive influence of war. They have escaped. But war is not to escape their destructive influence. We hear Mr. Asquith's voice speaking the judgment of the men who bore the burden of it, declaring that "under modern conditions war itself is not only a crime but an anachronism." It passes, but the Christian beliefs remain.

The war has disclosed the depth of our faith in God. Belief in him is clearer and more authoritative than ever. It is the well-nigh unanimous testimony of those who have returned from the front that nowhere did one meet so little atheism or agnosticism as in the army. One of the outstanding characteristics of the soldiers' life seems to have been their instinctive trust and assurance regarding God. Certain teachers and writers had undertaken to show that the physicist, the psychologist and the philosopher no longer believed in God and immortality, and one might naturally have inferred that such teachers would have dissolved the theistic faith of their pupils and that the common man would no longer have presumed to hold a faith repudiated by such accredited intellectual authority. But in actual life and human convictions that view was swept away during the war as by a flood. Men everywhere were found believing in God.

The pressure of life forced men to prayer. Where

else could they go? To Pershing and Haig and Foch? But where were these to go? Just where they did go. To God in prayer. Whether or no the nations adequately recognized their duty to God and dependence upon Him in public and official and corporate ways, the hearts of men and women and children found adequate comfort and strength only in God. There was more praying in America among all classes of people than ever before in our history. Probably men were not able to present any new apologetics for prayer—they just prayed. And nowhere was the naturalness and inevitableness of prayer more clearly revealed than in the experience of those who were face to face with the grim realities of warfare. "Pray?" said a rough lad when he came safely back. "No, I never did before, but I tell you when I got up to the front I prayed. Everybody prayed there." Though all this may be soon forgotten there is here an experience and a confession on which to build.

The Christian conception of the nature of man has also been confirmed afresh and accepted by all. The Christian doctrine of man is a bold paradox, asserting both his capacity for divine service and sacrifice and his appalling gift for moral degradation. On the one hand it has taught that man is made in the image of God and that Christ-like character is his true destiny. On the other hand it has declared the terrible power of sin to destroy the divine image in human life. And in what a striking manner has the war revealed the truth of this Christian paradox! For we have seen on the one hand a

godlikeness in men on a scale that we had never witnessed before. The war disclosed capacities for heroism, courage, sacrifice, endurance and unselfish devotion in soldiers, sailors, fathers, mothers, wives, boys and girls as we had never realized they possessed. Mankind has shown itself to be capable of any task or any sacrifice, however great. The war has made more clear what a glorious work God did in making man. But on the other hand it has also shown how selfish and brutish and degraded men can become. For we saw a spirit of self-assertiveness on the part of the leaders of a nation that brought the most terrific social consequences not only to themselves but to the world. We have had to witness such ruthless selfishness, such atrocities and crimes, and such other evidences of moral depravity, as reveal man not as the child of his father God, but as child of the devil. Man has demonstrated both his need for salvation from sin and the power of God to save and make him Christ-like in service and self-sacrifice.

The significance and summons of the Cross of Christ have been given a new illumination by the war. Three of the great principles which are embodied in the Cross were dominant principles in the war: the principle of achievement through self-abandonment, the principle of inner freedom through consecration to an unselfish cause, and the principle of vicarious suffering. (a) The war emphasized the principle of abandonment revealed in the Cross. "When He had by Himself purged our sins," says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews,

"He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." The later texts reject the words "By Himself" as a gloss, but the idea is there none the less in the mood of the verb. He did it by Himself, not by anything outside Himself. He used His life for it. That was the central lesson of the war. We have read all over the nation the challenging signs, "Food will win the war," "Ships will win the war," "Bonds will win the war." But while the war would not have been won without bonds and ships and food, they did not win it. Why were they needed at all? In the interest of men. Bonds were needed to equip men, ships to transport them, food to sustain them. But it took life, not the weapons or agencies of life, to achieve victory. The war has shown, as Paul taught, that we are saved by Christ's life, poured out on the Cross, poured out now through men. (b) The Cross represented the principle of inner freedom through consecration to a great cause. Jesus' whole life was so centered on God's purpose that he was free from all distracting and dividing influences. Not even death could turn Him aside. He moved in an orbit of liberty because His was a unified life. Neither property nor tradition nor conventions ever bound Him. He was no foe to private property, but He never allowed Himself to be enslaved to it. It was for use, not for impediment. When He died the only loot for His murderers was the one robe that He wore. And one great secret of the soldier's joy and fellowship lay in this sense of inner freedom, springing from devotion to an unselfish cause and lifting him above the tram-

mels of possessions which require to be guarded and which deflect action. In the war all things were held common and valueless except as they were ministers to the high end which the nation had undertaken to achieve. (c) The Cross represented the principle of vicarious suffering. Christ suffered that men might not suffer. He met the anguish of separation that man might be delivered from it. "In my thinking," wrote a thoughtful Christian lawyer in the midst of the war, "I have felt that perhaps the most succinct statement in reply to the suggestion that it is inconsistent for those who are opposed to war as itself an evil not only to submit to the war but enthusiastically to support it, is to point out that a war to end war is no more anomalous than is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ to end death. The whole scheme, as I interpret it, of our Christian faith, implies that. The sending of the Son of God to earth was, in the purpose of the Father, to make Him a Saviour and Lord, to destroy the enemies of man, sin and death. In the accomplishment of that purpose, He who knew no sin was made sin for us, and He who was the conqueror of death died for us. If this war is really waged as a righteous war, it has in it all the elements, not of a crusade to recover an empty tomb, but of a sacrifice unto death to break the bonds of human enslavement, and with a new meaning we can sing the old stanza of the Battle Hymn of the Republic—

'In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across
the sea,

With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you
and me;
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make
men free.'"

Men who could not put this in words, felt it. They knew that it was right and reasonable to die to diminish death, to suffer pain that there might be less pain to suffer, to accept the contradiction and separation of the grave for the sake of the affirmation and unity of life. Deeper and more religious meanings than we have ever proclaimed are discerned in the Cross of Christ revealed and illustrated in the war.

The war also brought into clearer view the function and the necessity of the Church. This judgment regarding the Church is just the judgment which some of the contemporary writers dispute. There are two things in the situation, however, which are reassuring. One is that no other institution has been given such discussion and scrutiny as the Church and the religion of which it is the corporate expression. It is clearly the subject of ultimate deepest human interest. Labor and trade may seem to fill a large place. They have won their place in the covenant of a League of Nations, while religion and religious liberty have not. But that is only because the latter problem is deeper and more abiding. The second reassuring factor is that the criticism which the Church is meeting is mainly from within. It is not primarily from those who are hostile or indifferent. Its serious critics are for the most part its own efficient teachers, whose

motive is not to destroy but to fulfil. It is they who say that men at large will have no further use for the Church unless there are radical changes in its teaching, its organization, its work and its spirit. No one can deny that principles of development and change have been at work in the past history of the Church, as in all history, and that these principles must continue to work if it is to be a living Church to-day. There may be differences of opinion among us as to what the goal should be, whether a recovery of the first century, or a return to the fourth or to the thirteenth, or a new development transcending all that is past. But back of all differences is the fact of the central and abiding place of the Church in human life, as revealed by the war. There is no space here to mass the evidence. There is room only for the strongest statement of the conviction that the Church in its embodiment of the principle of the corporate union of souls in the family of God, in its declaration of the law of love and sacrifice and human unity, in its mediation of the life of God to men, in its affirmations of justice and truth and duty, in its deathless faith in a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, in its testimony to the accessible forces of spiritual regeneration, in its actual attainments in democracy and human service, emerges from the war clearer and stronger than ever it was before in America.

Most clearly of all has the war reaffirmed the glory of Christ and the validity of His gospel. While to some His words have come to seem too

hard and His spirit too gentle, to the rest of the nation He stands out a diviner figure than ever. Duty itself means more to men because of the new depths of life which we have experienced and by which we reinterpret Christ. Sayings of His whose meaning had become formalized for us have been broken open and we realize afresh that they are spirit and they are life. Perhaps we have no adequate basis on which to generalize a judgment regarding the attitude of the common man to Christ. We may safely say that the common man does not know a great deal about Him and that the processes of religious education in America have been shown to be pitiably inadequate and ineffective. But what the common man does know is essentially religious. He knows that Christ was good and that He died for truth and humanity, and such love and such loyalty as Christ's he recognizes as the greatest things in the world. Christ is to America to-day more surely than ever the image and the moral demand of God. And the war has made unmistakably clear the validity of the fundamental ethical judgments of Jesus Christ. It has shown that the only possible solution of our social relationships lies in His principle of love and service and sacrifice. The war itself was the great illustration of the bankruptcy of the alternative principle of selfish competition and self-aggrandizement. The war has declared that what Christ said is forever true. It was a significant statement that the New York *Nation* made shortly after the armistice was signed: "Our great adventure of the past year, its outcome,

our motives and methods and expectations must finally, beyond even the verdict of history, which is the last hope of the statesman-politician, be submitted to the verdict of Jesus, and meet the measure of His Gospel. . . . The collective experience of the race has shown that the physical order of the universe is as Newton said it was. His guidance is trustworthy. Those who accept it go right, and those who refuse it go wrong, and sooner or later come to grief. Collective experience has shown, too, that the moral order of the universe is as Jesus said, and that the way to keep safely and successfully in with it is the way He indicated."

And, in the third place, one of the most hopeful effects of the war on the religious outlook is the new spirit of cooperation among the churches, and their desire for still greater unity in the approaching days. They have been drawn together more closely than ever in prayer and activity. In the work of the churches during the war there was a degree of cooperation hitherto unknown. In such an organization as the General War-Time Commission of the Churches more than a score of communions were actually working together on common tasks, without the sacrifice of any vital conviction or principle on the part of any of their constituents. And in the days following the war we have seen increasing interest in the possibility both of a more far-reaching practical cooperation among the administrative agencies of the churches and also an intensified desire to secure a more effective unification of their whole life and spirit. We need not be dis-

couraged by the difficulty of arranging official and organized unity. The Living Spirit is at work and men's hearts are in fellowship. There is to be an ever and rapidly increasing measure of cooperation in all Christian service. The atmosphere for such service is cleared of much foul confusion and charged with new vision and hopes. And the fuller expression of brotherhood within the Church will be the prophecy of a wider human brotherhood everywhere. Men are speaking more courageously of ideals and high duties. It is true that some who before the war thought that human nature did not require the regeneration of the Gospel now think that no regeneration can make it capable of the moral progress which both the Gospel and the sentiment of mankind demand. But this surrender of human nature to its own delinquencies will not be left unchallenged by the summons of new times and the call of God. We breathe the air of hope and our hopes are realizable through the brotherhood of Christ. "It is the rational, the inevitable consequence of a war which has let loose the fountains of the great deep," says Mr. Asquith, "that eyes should be opened to things they never saw before, that new hopes, new aspirations, new dreams should be engendered in minds which were dulled by habit, whose windows have never been opened to the light and air, and that not a few of the conventions which have held things together would be found to have lost their binding force. That is what is going on all round us at this moment, and nothing in my judgment is so important as the temper with which

we watch and handle this new development. Of one thing you may be quite certain, that mere negation and mere repression will not suffice. A league of classes may seem to the common judgment as Utopian as did, less than five years ago, a League of Nations. But let us keep in touch with facts. The artificial and brittle bonds of convention have served their purpose and had their day. See to it not only in the international, but in the domestic sphere here at home, at your own doors, and among your own people—see to it that you replace those temporary and more or less artificial ties by something that is not artificial but natural, by something that is not brittle but unbreakable—the enduring bond of human brotherhood."

The religious outlook includes not only some such general appraisement of the situation in which the Church stands at the end of the war. It requires also a survey of the tasks that lie ahead.

The great tasks now confronting the Church in the period after the war may be roughly summarized as three: first, the building of a Christian social order at home; secondly, the reconstruction of our international relationships in accord with a Christian world order; and, thirdly, the task of reorganizing the work of the Church to cope adequately with the problems of the new day.

Among the social responsibilities confronting us at home perhaps the most outstanding and urgent is the relation of the Church to the industrial problems of the present day. No doubt there has been some justification for the criticism that the

Church here and there has not in the past been sufficiently concerned with the things that touch most directly the daily lives of the majority of men. This has not been true of the Church generally, but it must not be so at all in the future. The Church must preach with new power the significance of Christian principles in all our social relationships. It must give its influence to setting up those industrial standards without which the ideal of Christian citizenship cannot be adequately realized by millions of men. In this day when there is everywhere a new emphasis on democracy, men must recognize its applicability to industry as well as to politics. But we must make it unmistakably clear that in any democratic organization of industry, as in any other democratic movement, Christianity is absolutely indispensable. No mere economic solution will suffice. Capitalistic autocracy has had its day and failed. Class government by the proletariat is writing down the story of its failure now before the eyes of the world. Democratic organization of industry waits to be tried. It too will fail unless it rests on the spirit of brotherhood and the principle of Christian service and self-control. Social and economic changes in America are inevitable. But these changes will constitute progress only as they are effected in just and orderly ways and under the process of developing law. Only the Christian faith can supply the self-restraint, the tolerance, the good-will essential to such an evolution.

Another of the great social responsibilities of the

Church in this country is the problem of race and of right relationship to the foreigners who have come to us. Our Christian faith must supply the forces of unification which we realize now, more clearly than before the war, must operate immediately upon the heterogeneous elements of our national life. Next to the problem of man's moral inadequacy, the race problem is the greatest of all human problems. We have done more towards its solution in America than any other nation. But it is far from solution still. Legislation and sociology are not adequate to the task. Only the Christian principle of brotherhood is capable of providing stable foundations for it. And the racial problem comes to us in another and perhaps more difficult form within our own borders in our colored fellow-citizens. Here, too, we must learn to apply more thoroughly the principle of democracy in the defence of which in the war they played so great a part. Our racial problem is soluble only when we are ready to see in every man Christ's brother and our own,—when we do not simply tolerate the man who is racially different from us, but respect him as a child of God.

The problem of race is one that reaches far beyond the boundaries of our own nation. It confronts the Church with the broadest international problems. In the creation of the new world order the Church has contributions to make that are of transcendent significance. A League of Nations must be set up and to be effective in securing permanent peace must be established on fundamental

Christian principles. The Church must create the sentiment that will sustain the league and make it helpful and strong, vital with the life of a genuine Christian brotherhood. The spirit of competition and self-aggrandizement must be supplanted by a spirit of cooperation and good-will, and such a spirit can prevail only as the Church can win for the Christian principle of love the recognition of men's minds and the allegiance of their wills. The ex-Governor of Canada, Earl Grey, saw this clearly when he said in his last message to the world: "I want to say to the people—'there's a real way out of the mess materialism has got us into. I have been trying to tell them for thirty years. It's Christ's way . . . . We've got to get together. We've got to realize we're all members of one family. There's nothing can help humanity, I'm perfectly sure there isn't, except love. Love's the way out and the way up.' That's my farewell to the world."

The new internationalism has brought to the foreign missionary enterprise of the Church an enlarged significance and a greater urgency. It has become clear that we cannot Christianize internationalism unless we internationalize Christianity. And the foreign missionary task is the one great movement that clearly rests upon the conception of the brotherhood of all men everywhere. It has been the most far-reaching international agency in the world up to the present day, the most effective method of manifesting good-will and of giving our best to others. We see more

PEDAGOGICAL LIBRARY
OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
YALE SCHOOL OF RELIGION

clearly now that the work at which foreign missions have been toiling has been the preparation for any effective community of nations and is the great work of the world. "The one sure hope of a permanent foundation for world peace," as Viscount Bryce has said, "lies in the expansion throughout the world of the principles of the Christian Gospel."

The magnitude of the new responsibilities of the Christian Church both at home and abroad constitute a new challenge to it to gather and to employ its full spiritual resources. Only thus can it hope to cope adequately with its tremendous tasks. Three things are needed within the Church—first, a more effective program of Christian education; secondly, a greater Christian cooperation, and thirdly, a richer and fuller experience of life.

The war has revealed to us the magnitude and gravity of our whole problem of education. A democracy is not safe with such a mass of illiteracy as the war has uncovered. But the problem is not solved simply by increasing the percentage of literates to the total population. We need not simply education, but Christian education—training that issues in religious conviction and Christian personality. Among all the things that the chaplains and others who have been in touch with the religious life of the army have revealed to us, few are more appalling than the lack of comprehension of the meaning of Christianity and of the elements of religious faith, which were found to be characteristic of great masses of our men, side by

side with a widely prevalent and child-like religious instinct. Such ignorance is a central flaw in a self-controlled and self-governing nation. Our strength lies in the intelligent religious convictions of our people. In the more comprehensive sense of the term the whole problem of the Church is now more clearly seen to be one of education. We have to bring every available resource to bear to make the pulpit, the Sunday School, the day school, the university, the theological seminary, all our educational factors, efficient in carrying out the great task of the Church of training men and women in Christian character.

Secondly, there is the need for greater Christian cooperation. We cannot hope to unify our national life or international life unless we can first unify the life of the Church. How can we expect to hold effectively before the world a standard which we have not ourselves attained? The Churches have learned much about the possibilities of cooperation in the war. They have actually found themselves working together in great common tasks in a way which they had not realized to be possible before. But the tasks that now confront the Church are no less challenging than those that faced it during the war. The Church cannot hope to deal with them adequately unless it approaches them in a spirit of common purpose and united endeavor. There is no more urgent work to be done than that of bringing about such a coordination of the various Christian agencies as will make possible the most effective approach to the responsibilities of the new day.

And thirdly, and most of all, there is need in the Church of a richer and fuller experience of life. Rearrangements and redistributions of our present power will not be enough. The number must be multiplied of Christian persons in whom the God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead works by that same almighty power to reproduce in them the mind and the Spirit of Christ and to make of them, wherever they are and in whatever association of men, witnesses to a new principle of life and channels for the communication of that life to the world.

These are some of the tasks of the Church in the period following the war. They are not new tasks. They have always been its duties. But they press upon us now with new insistence. They demand that the Church must now bear witness more clearly than ever to God's purpose to establish an order of righteousness and justice and peace on the earth. Many men are denying the possibility of such an order. Human nature, they say, can not sustain it. The Church must therefore hold Christ before men as the evidence of the limitless possibilities of humanity in the light of the incarnation. Christians must supply the faith and the courage which are needed for new progress toward the realization of the Kingdom of God. They must dare to prefer measures which seek to change old things and to hasten that Kingdom, no matter if such measures are experimental, as they must inevitably be, to measures which are sure and clear but which only perpetuate an order now outgrown.

Is the Christian Church equal to the work which the religious outlook involves for it? Does it believe deeply and clearly enough the great truths which alone can be the foundation for the better age? Is it ready to trust wholly the Divine Love and His power and willingness to help men? Will it dare to join its Lord both in offering the prayer and in paying the full price necessary to its answer, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven" ?

PHOTOMOUNT
PAMPHLET BINDER
PAT. NO.
877188
Manufactured by
GAYLORD BROS. Inc.
Syracuse, N. Y.
Stockton, Calif.

DATE DUE

BT 736.2 .S68 1919

Speer, Robert Elliott, 1867-

The war and the religious outlook

United Theological Seminary Library
MAIN BT736.2 .S68 1919
Speer, Robert The war and the religious
3 0645 0005 6101 5